

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-10 INR-10 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PRS-01 SAM-01 DRC-01 RSC-01 /049 W

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R 201146Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0794

INFO CINCPAC

USSAG NKP

S E C R E T BANGKOK 2866

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, MOPS

SUBJ: THANAT KHOMAN SPEECH FEBRUARY 20 ON USSAG

1. I AM REPORTING SEPARATELY THE GIST OF THANAT KHOMAN'S REMARKS AT AN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LUNCHEON FEBRUARY 20 TO THE EFFECT THAT WE DID NOT REPEAT NOT RECEIVE RTG APPROVAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF USSAG AT NAKHON PHANON. WE WILL ATTEMPT TO PREVENT THIS FROM BECOMING A MAJOR ISSUE BY TAKING THE LINE IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES THAT THIS IS THE SAME OLD ISSUE WHICH CAME UP LAST JULY AND AUGUST ON WHICH WE SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT AT THAT TIME. IF ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ARE NECESSARY, I HAVE INDICATED THE GENERAL LINE WE PLAN TO TAKE IN THE SEPARATE REPORTING TELEGRAM.

2. I DO NOT BELIEVE AT THIS POINT THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR US TO TAKE THANAT ON DIRECTLY; THIS WOULD ONLY GIVE ADDED PUBLICITY TO HIS ALLEGATIONS. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WASHINGTON BE FULLY AWARE THAT THANAT IS DISTORTING THE FACTS AS FAR AS USSAG IS CONCERNED. THE INITIAL APPROACH TO THE RTG REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF USSAG AND JCRC WAS MADE BY AMBASSADOR UNGER DECEMBER 12, 1972 (BANGKOK 17461). AT THAT TIME UNGER PRESENTED A LETTER TO FIELD MARSHAL THANOM FORMALLY REQUESTING HIS APPROVAL AND EXPLAIN-

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ING OUR REQUEST IN DETAIL.

3. RTG DID NOT REPLY TO OUR LETTER BUT INSTEAD STARTED TO USE THIS AS A PRESSURE POINT, PROMISING WRITTEN REPLY WHEN WE PROVIDED DETAILED INFORMATION ON AMERICAN CONTRACTORS DOING BUSINESS FOR THE U.S. MILITARY IN THAILAND. EVEN AFTER WE PROVIDED THIS INFORMATION A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR UNGER'S LETTER WAS NEVER RECEIVED.

4. ON FEBRUARY 9, DURING LUNCHEON GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER THANOM FOR DR. KISSINGER, AMBASSADOR UNGER RAISED ISSUE WITH MARSHAL THANOM, STRESSING THAT DECISION WAS URGENT IN VIEW FACT PARIS CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN SIGNED. THANOM GAVE ORAL APPROVAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF JCRC AND USSAG AT THAT TIME (BANGKOK 2252).

5. ISSUE SURFACED AGAIN IN JULY/AUGUST 1973 (SEE MALCOLM BROWN ARTICLE IN JULY 29, 1973 "NEW YORK TIMES") FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS BY THANAT AND ALSO BY FOREIGN MINISTRY PRESS SPOKESMAN THAT PROPER APPROVAL FOR USSAG HAD NOT BEEN OBTAINED. WE BACKGROUNDED U.S. JOURNALISTS AND OTHERS ON ACTUAL SITUATION AT THAT TIME. ON AUGUST 22, 1973 AMBASSADOR UNGER AGAIN RAISED MATTER WITH PRIME MINISTER THANOM WHO RECONFIRMED HIS EARLIER ORAL APPROVAL BUT STRESSED ITS SENSITIVITY. IT WAS THEN PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT THANOM WOULD NOT PUBLICLY CONFIRM HIS ORAL APPROVAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF USSAG.

6. REQUEST DEPARTMENT TREAT THIS AS BACKGROUND ONLY AT PRESENT SINCE WE DO NOT WANT TO FEED FIRES EITHER IN BANGKOK OR WASHINGTON.
KINTNER

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